

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 172

By Hurt

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory and praise the professional achievements of Mac Boyd "Bill" Emerson.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Mac Boyd "Bill" Emerson, a dedicated educator who championed financial equity and adequacy for public schools; and

WHEREAS, as a teacher, coach, administrator, friend, and mentor, he positively impacted many lives in his community; and

WHEREAS, a fifty-year veteran of public education, Mr. Emerson taught mathematics and coached basketball at Bells High School for seventeen years, taking the boys' basketball team to the Tennessee State tournament in the late 1960s; and

WHEREAS, he next served as principal of the school and was subsequently superintendent of Bells City Schools; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Emerson provided leadership in the consolidation of Crockett County high schools and middle schools in the 1980s and served as the county's school superintendent; and

WHEREAS, in response to a severe lack of funding for rural school systems circa 1986, Mr. Emerson co-founded the Tennessee Small School Administrators Association, which successfully lobbied for a new funding formula for rural schools; and

WHEREAS, the organization brought three lawsuits against the State and prevailed in each of them; ultimately, a favorable ruling by the Tennessee Supreme Court resulted in the passage and implementation of the current formula of the Basic Education Program, which also helped to equalize the pay of teachers serving in rural school systems; and

WHEREAS, some thirty-five years after Mr. Emerson's groundbreaking work and visionary leadership, the organization has evolved into the Tennessee School Systems for Equity with eighty-seven member districts; its sole purpose is still ensuring the financial equity and adequacy of public schools in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, after retiring in 2005, Mr. Emerson enjoyed pursuing his many hobbies; he was a world traveler, an avid reader, the author of two historical fiction novels, and a Paul Harris Fellow with the Rotary Foundation; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of Bells High School, Bill Emerson attended the University of Tennessee at Martin for two years and graduated from Murray State University; he received his master's degree in mathematics from Middle Tennessee State University; and

WHEREAS, he is survived by his wife of sixty-four years, June Stephens Emerson; son, Vince; daughters, Lori and Jill; daughters-in-law, Kay and Otti; son-in-law, John Nelson; thirteen grandchildren; and two step-great-grandsons; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Emerson was preceded in death by his son, John Ollie Emerson, and his parents, Malcolm and Maggie Lou Emerson; and

WHEREAS, Bill Emerson overcame many obstacles to bring about funding equity for rural schools across the State, and his legacy will live on to inspire future generations; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Mac Boyd "Bill" Emerson, reflecting fondly upon his many professional accomplishments as an educator and administrator, and extend to his family and friends our sympathy and condolences.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to

the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.